

**Conversion of cultivable land into desert**

† 2029. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that cultivable land is being converted into deserts in various parts of the country;

(b) if so, whether Government are going to take any step to prevent conversion of fertile land into desert; and

(c) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI S.B.P.B.K. SATYANARAYANA RAO): (a) No sir. Reports have indicated that on account of generation of suitable technologies and adoption of these technologies and their dissemination through appropriate Centrally Sponsored Schemes desert area has been contained.

(b) and (c) The Ministry of Rural Development is implementing a Centrally Sponsored Programme of Desert Development in the country with the objective of mitigating the adverse effects of desertification, combating desertification, restoring ecological balance by harnessing, conserving and developing land, water, vegetative cover for raising land productivity. Uptil now an area of 4.57 lakh sq. kms. has been covered under the scheme at a total expenditure of Rs. 423 crores. In addition, the Ministry of Environment and Forests is in the process of preparation of a National Action Plan (NAP) for Combating Desertification and Drought in the country.

**Prices of Fertilizers**

† 2030. SHRI BACHANI LEKHRAJ: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have increased or propose to increase rates of fertilizers;

(b) if so, whether Government would consider to reduce or check the prices of fertilizers; and

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† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.